

# Link

November 2024

*Also in this issue...*

Join us for a season of reflection



5

St Boniface achieved its Silver Eco Church award from A Rocha



12

An update on the Alsama project



Please give to St Boniface to maintain this beautiful church building

A magazine for the parishes of Bunbury and Tilstone Fearnall

**ALL SOULS  
MEMORIAL  
SERVICE**

**SUNDAY 3 NOVEMBER  
4.00 PM**

During the service the names of the departed will be read out - those who have died last year as well as those whom people would like remembered. There will also be an opportunity to light candles in their memory. You can contact Rev Tim Hayward via email at [revtimhayward@stbonifacebunbury.org](mailto:revtimhayward@stbonifacebunbury.org)  
If you would find it comforting to come along and sit quietly to remember those who are important to you, please do join us.

**REMEMBRANCE  
SERVICE**

**SUNDAY 10 NOVEMBER  
10.45 AM  
ST BONIFACE CHURCH**

Preceded by  
procession leaving  
from the Scout Hut  
at 10.15 am



Follow Bunbury Church on Facebook

# Who we are

## TIM HAYWARD - Vicar

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## St Boniface

### Churchwarden

Sean Augustin-Wood  
sean.augustin@stbonifacebunbury.org

### Vice-Chair

Elaine Crotty  
elaine.crotty@stbonifacebunbury.org

### Treasurer

Yvonne Wood 01270 528442

### Secretary

John Mason 01829 733971

## St Jude's

### Churchwardens

Elizabeth Marren 01270 528556  
Mike Lightfoot 01829 732611

### Organist

Ann Badrock 01829 260343

## Calveley

### Churchwarden

Sean Augustin-Wood  
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### Secretary

Yvonne Wood 01270 528442

## The Link

Please contact us to advertise your business or to send us your news, views and pictures.

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### Editorial:

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### Graphic design:

Kay Carson  
You can also read The Link online at:  
www.stbonifacebunbury.org

# Community news

Congratulations to Amelia Chesterton and Peter Stringer who were married on 20 June at St Boniface.



Congratulations to Maddie Dixon and Jamie Kettle who were married on 28 September at St Boniface.



The Remembrance Service at **St Jude's** will be on Sunday 10 November at 9:30am with refreshments in the church hall afterwards.

There will also be a Service of Remembrance on Monday 11 November at 11:00am at the **Tiverton Memorial**; refreshments will be served in the village hall afterwards.

Thanks must go to those people who decorated **St Boniface** so beautifully for the Harvest festival and also to those people who clean the church regularly on the first Tuesday of each month. If anyone would like to be involved in either of these groups please contact the editor with your details. The next Tuesday clean will be

on **3 December from 9:00–11:00am**.

The next time the flower team will meet will be to decorate the church for



Christmas. There is also a group who helps with the churchyard who would be delighted with new volunteers.

**Decibellas Christmas concert** will be at St Boniface church on **Saturday 7 December at 7:30pm**. With a mix of Christmas songs and audience participation carols, as well as a bucket collection for the local dementia support charity, Snow Angels, it'll be a festive treat. Tickets (£10 adults £5 children) are available from Stitch, Tarporley, or [www.decibellas.co.uk](http://www.decibellas.co.uk) and are sure to sell out.

**Pop-up Christmas Choir** We are delighted to announce that Marcus Williams will be directing our Christmas Choir at St Boniface for our annual Carol Service on **Sunday 22 December 6:30pm**. All are welcome to join and there will be rehearsals on Saturday 7, 14 and 21 December between 10:00am–12:00pm at St Boniface.

**Bunbury WI** meets on the second Thursday of the month at Bunbury Playing Fields Pavilion at 7:30pm. New members and guests are warmly welcomed. At the October meeting members enjoyed a hot pot lunch and a talk from Rachel Davies on "How textiles tell stories". The November meeting is the AGM followed by a quiz social evening. For further information contact Lynda Davies 01829 863781.



## A word from the editor

I start with an apology to Jennie Money: in the Gardening Club article in last month's Link we mistakenly called her Janie — sorry, Jennie!

No one could fail to be affected by the reports of Sophie's, the Duchess of Edinburgh, trip to Chad, where she met refugees from the war in Sudan. At a time where the world is in a state of upheaval, sometimes it is difficult to see the good. I hope that my article on the Alsama schools project on page 10 will show that there is light.

On a totally different note, our next Link will be December's edition. If anyone would like to send Christmas wishes to their friends or the village via the magazine, please could you email me with your message by Tuesday 12 November and make a donation to Crisis?

My email is [parishlinkeditor@stbonifacebunbury.org](mailto:parishlinkeditor@stbonifacebunbury.org)

**Bunbury Gardening Club** will hold their last meeting of 2024 on **Tuesday 19 November at 7:30pm** in the village hall for members only. A brief AGM will be followed by a two-course Gardeners' Supper — members are invited to BYOW or alternative drink to accompany their meal.

**Alpraham and Calveley Village Hall** The brand new village hall will be open for coffee and chat between **10:00am and 12:00pm on Wednesday 13 November and 11 December**. All are welcome. Check the website for other activities: [acvillagehall.co.uk](http://acvillagehall.co.uk)

**Just Sing** Please go to page 11 for exciting news. [Justsingbunbury.co.uk](http://Justsingbunbury.co.uk)

**ALIVE** the Bunbury Warm Hub reopens on 1 November: **Monday to Friday from 10:30am**. Elderly villagers are welcome to enjoy a free, hot cup of tea or coffee with biscuits in a warm and friendly environment

**Pub Crawl** Thinking about the big issues of life over a pint with Rev Tim. **Thursdays at 7:30pm** at The Yew Tree on 7 November and at The Swan on 5 December.

It is with great sadness that we announce the death of our dear churchwarden **Si Lees-Jones**. Si was a remarkable gentleman and there will be a full tribute to him in our next edition. He will be sorely missed by all at St Boniface — his friendship and faith were inspirational and our prayers are with his beautiful family: Chrissy, Lara and Tess at this difficult time.

**The copy deadline for the December – January issue is Friday 15 November. The magazine should be delivered from Saturday 30 November. Please send notices to [parishlinkeditor@stbonifacebunbury.org](mailto:parishlinkeditor@stbonifacebunbury.org)**



## Sparks

Saints come in all shapes and sizes and it is easy to be humorous with hagiology — the study of saints. There are saints for travellers, sore throats, children, pets and lost causes, as well as the internet, ice skating, hangovers and oversleeping. There is a saint to celebrate for almost every day of the year.

But during the month of November we celebrate All Saints and All Souls and reflect on the people who have touched us with their lives and inspired us with their love.

According to one Jewish tradition, we are all in the hands of God. But it is the righteous souls who “glow like sparks in the stubble”. It is an enchanting image. Saints, rather like the embers of a bonfire, continue to give off light and heat, and may still illuminate our lives. They, like sparks, are thrown out of the fire into the world. They are on loan, setting light to life, illuminating us with their wisdom and love. They may have died, but they are not forgotten. Their lives still speak to us today, and remind us why life is really worth living.

All saints, like all souls, are normal folk. They just give their lives over to God and watch God turn the ordinary into the extraordinary.

So at the start of this month of remembering, take some time out to light a candle and give thanks for the people who have shaped your life for the better. Allow their wisdom and love to travel through time and speak into your heart and ask some searching questions:

Will you choose kindness over bitterness? Will you choose to forgive even when it makes no sense? Will you radiate warmth, peace, openness and hospitality to those around you? Will you be a beam of light and joy in a world that is so often dark and cold?

God will be with us — through whatever shadows or valleys we walk. There is no way around the difficulties we face in life. But faith offers a way through these things. As the poet Minnie Louise Haskins wrote many years ago:

I said to the man  
Who stood at the gate of the year,  
“Give me light that I may tread safely  
Into the unknown”.  
And he replied,  
“Go out into the darkness  
And put your hand into the hand of God.  
That shall be to you  
Better than light  
And safer than a known way.”  
So I went forth  
And finding the hand of God,  
Trode gladly into the night.

Rev Mike Rogers

## Contemplative prayer



A monthly session of Contemplative Prayer has been a regular feature in this parish since April 2018 and there has been, despite the disruption of COVID (when we met on Zoom) at least one session each month with two being the norm from October 2021.

Towards the end of this year, the Contemplative Prayer Group will reach something of a milestone; the November session will be the 80th and, faced with dwindling numbers, it seems an appropriate point at which to draw these regular Contemplative Prayer sessions to a close. Accordingly, the two gatherings on Tuesday 19 November will be the last.

As the leader, I would want to thank those who have been involved for their support and encouragement over the years.

### A message from Rev Tim to Rev Mike:

Thank you Mike.

On behalf of the PCC and the church family I want to say a big thank you to you for leading Contemplative Prayer once a month at St Boniface for the last six and a half years. Eighty sessions is quite an achievement! Prayer is the most natural thing in the world (like breathing) and yet we all make it so difficult for ourselves! It's a wonderful thing to do nothing but just sit still and listen to God's nudging.

Thank you Mike for sharing this exercise and gift with a wider group. Your prayers over the past seven years have been a pillar of support and strength not just to those who took part but for all the wider community who call this place home.

## Church diary for November

Sunday 3 November	8:00am BCP Communion 9:30am Morning Worship 10:30am Holy Communion and Forest Church 11:30am Holy Communion 4:00pm All Saints Memorial Service	St Boniface St Jude St Boniface  Calveley St Boniface
Wednesday 6 November	10:00am BCP Communion	St Boniface
Sunday 10 November	09:30am Remembrance Sunday 10:45am Remembrance Sunday	St Jude St Boniface
Wednesday 13 November	10:00am BCP Communion	St Boniface
Sunday 17 November	9:30am Holy Communion 10:30am Third Sunday Brunch - Safeguarding Sunday 6:00pm Evensong	St Jude St Boniface  St Boniface
Tuesday 19 November	2:30 and 7:30pm Contemplative Prayer	St Boniface
Wednesday 20 November	10:00am BCP Communion	St Boniface
Sunday 24 November	9:30am Morning Worship 10:30am Holy Communion	St Jude St Boniface
Wednesday 27 November	10:00am BCP Communion	St Boniface

## A big thank you to David Kendrick

Huge thanks must go to David Kendrick who has been a member of the Bunbury PCC for many years and has decided to step down from that role. David was also one of our churchwardens during which time he made an invaluable contribution to the parish stewarding the historical assets which churches like ours look after for future generations. As a very active member of many PCC committees David could always be relied upon to add wisdom to our discussions. His accountant's eye for detail always helped when financial accounts were being presented and his influence has been felt throughout the running of the church.

David has always supported Calveley Chapel and was a huge force in maintaining a worshipping presence there, providing another space for traditional services within the parish.

The PCC would like to thank David and Rita for all their service over the years. David, of course, writes about the history of St Boniface Church for the Link and I look forward to many more of his articles.

# Caring for our churchyard

*Andrea Gilpin, Ecologist and Communications Manager at Caring for God's Acre reflects on the value of the night sky*

The night sky is a vital, shared resource for all life on Earth, yet the increasing spread of artificial lighting has obscured the stars and altered how we experience the night. For most of human history, people lived under a vast, star-filled sky — one that inspired countless advances in science, shaped religious beliefs, and fuelled the imagination of artists, philosophers, and writers. Today, the natural darkness of the sky, once a universal experience, is fading from memory, and many of the youngest generations may never fully know its wonder. Evidence shows that artificial light at night has negative effects on wildlife including amphibians, birds, mammals, insects and even plants. Wildlife, such as birds, bats, and moths, rely on darkness for migration, navigation, and feeding. Light pollution can disorient these species, leading to population declines and disturbed ecosystems. Sixty percent of insects are active at night, and it's estimated that one-third of those drawn to artificial light die as a consequence. Each year, millions of birds lose their lives during migration after becoming disoriented and fatigued from circling and colliding with brightly lit buildings. A recent study by biologists, conducted over two decades in Chicago, revealed the significant impact of light pollution on birds and how reducing it can make a difference. By

dimming half the windows in a building during nighttime, the researchers observed a remarkable reduction in bird collisions — eleven times fewer during spring migration and six times fewer in the autumn. In total, the study estimates that this simple change lowered bird fatalities by 60% . For humans, exposure to excessive artificial light can disrupt circadian rhythms, impacting sleep quality and contributing to health issues like insomnia and stress. In the UK, efforts to combat light pollution are gaining momentum. Practical solutions, such as shielded, energy-efficient lighting that reduces sky glow are being put in place along with the obvious solution of turning lights off. By safeguarding our dark skies, we can support wildlife and ensure that we can all stand beneath a canopy of stars, undimmed by modern life.

For more information visit The Commission for Dark Skies  
<https://britastro.org/>



[andrea@cpga.org.uk](mailto:andrea@cpga.org.uk) - [www.caringforgodsacre.org.uk](http://www.caringforgodsacre.org.uk)



Exactly two years ago St Boniface and Bunbury PCC embarked on the EcoChurch accreditation path. Last autumn we reached Bronze level. We are delighted to report that we have just been accredited with the Silver level award. The church is rated on five different dimensions (see the poster on page 13 for more details). On two of these we have already achieved gold level: worship and land. The latter has been boosted in several ways this year, notably by the graveyard wildlife and plant audit and action plan which Kay and Jasper Carson have spearheaded. Many thanks to them and the volunteers who help manage the project. Also to the young people who continue to make a great contribution, through Forest Church activities.

*Jeremy Shears*

## Our prayers

*Dear Father,  
Faced with the tragedies we witness, directly or through others, we struggle to pray with faith. Yet you teach us that Jesus, who looked over Jerusalem and longed to bring your children together, also established a kingdom where there is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male or female, but we are all one in Christ Jesus. Father, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of our faith, we pray for this world and for each other — that we may be peacemakers in this world of trouble, and that your call of salvation reaches the lives that were made to be in communion with you. May we never lose hope, because you are faithful to your promises.  
Amen*



# Bunbury School news



On Friday 4 October Bunbury Aldersey CE Primary school walked to St Boniface church for the Harvest service. This year the theme was based on the UN rights of the child and thankfulness, which is the Christian value focus for this half term.

As a UN-accredited Rights Respecting School we have four

key areas of impact for children: wellbeing, participation, relationships and self-esteem. The difference that a Rights Respecting School makes goes beyond the school gates, making a positive impact on the whole community. (You can find out more about this UN programme at [unicef.org.uk/rights-respecting-schools/what-is-a-rights-respecting-school/](http://unicef.org.uk/rights-respecting-schools/what-is-a-rights-respecting-school/).)

It was fantastic to see so many parents and carers supporting the Harvest Service and listening to the children's work around the theme of thankfulness and the rights of the child. Bunbury School is so much more than academic learning and the children proved this with their words, poems and songs throughout the service. Some of the children added to their performance using BSL which they

had been learning and sang "Thank You" in Spanish.

The children proved that they are great ambassadors of change for the future, with their messages of kindness, hope, generosity and love. They spoke clearly and confidently. For the children in Reception this was the first time they had taken part in a school service.



As the headteacher I am incredibly proud of all the children and extremely grateful to work with such a dedicated staff team who ensure the children are performing and presenting such important messages to such a high standard.

We were blessed with an abundance of very generous donations of food, for which we are grateful, and which have been donated to the local charity, Chance Changing Lives.

**Nic Badger**  
Principal



# Sky Notes for November

November can provide good opportunities for stargazing with its long nights, but you will need to wrap up warm so you can spend more time outside enjoying the planets that are on view and the winter constellations. Several layers are better than a single thick coat. Heavy-soled boots are also beneficial, especially if you wear two pairs of socks. And don't forget the woolly hat to stop heat loss from your head!

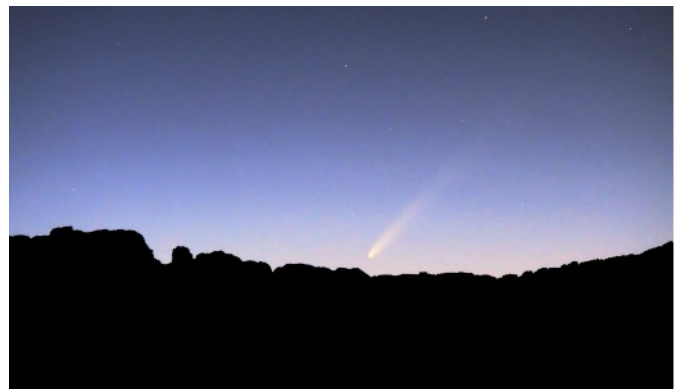
Throughout the month, Venus lies in the west after sunset. At the beginning of the month, it will be low down towards the horizon, but it will get higher as the month progresses. It will be the brightest object in the sky. On 5 November it lies to the right of the crescent Moon.

Jupiter is the next brightest planet. It rises around 5:30pm. On 17 November it lies to the left of the Moon, which is just past full.

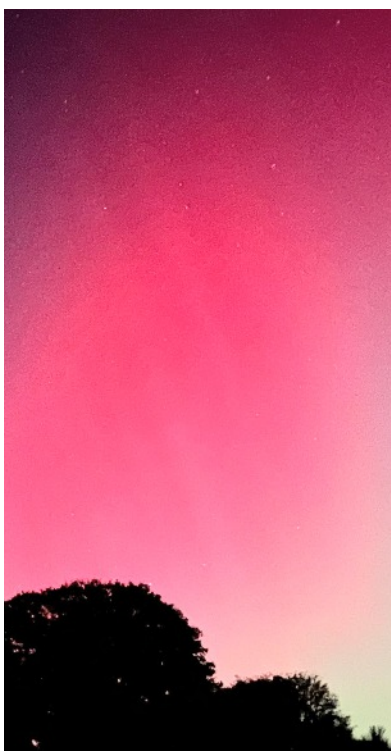
Mars is also visible this month, in the constellation of Cancer. On 20 November it is to the right of the Moon.

As I write this, we are expecting good views of Comet C/2023 A3 Tsuchinshan-ATLAS during October. Unfortunately, it will have gone from our skies by November, but the attached image shows its beautiful tail. Clear skies!

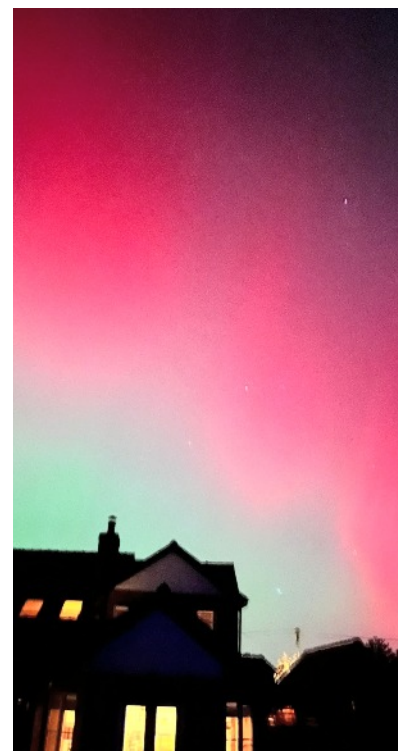
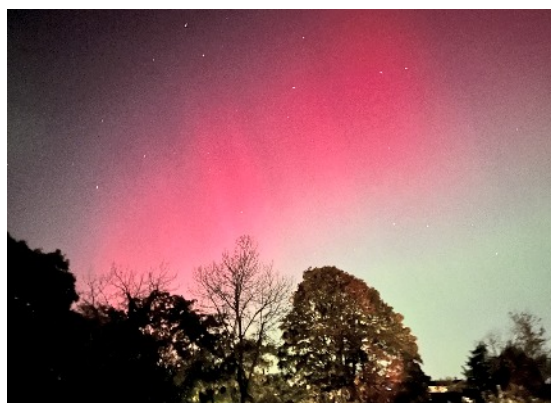
*Bunbury Stargazer*



Comet C/2023 A3 Tsuchinshan-ATLAS (Mazin Younis)



The Northern Lights over Bunbury — with thanks to Peter Styles for the photo below and Iain McNeil for the photos to the sides





# Bunbury Medical Practice

## November news

### Flu Season

Update — flu vaccinations are well underway in the practice with over 1,000 patients already booked in for their vaccine appointment. We would encourage all eligible patients to contact reception to book their free flu vaccine. (All patients aged over 65 are eligible to receive a flu vaccination. Some patients under 65 are also eligible; please contact the surgery if you are unsure.)

### Covid-19 Vaccinations

We are not offering Covid-19 vaccinations at the surgery this winter. However, The Tarvin Centre, Meadow Close, Chester CH3 8LY is running a Covid-19 vaccination clinic throughout November: Monday to Saturday, 10:00am to 4:00pm.

Eligible patient criteria:

- Adults aged 65 years and over
- Residents in a care home for older adults
- Individuals aged 6 months to 64 years in a clinical risk group
- Frontline NHS and social care workers and those working in care homes for older people

Please book an appointment via the National Booking System — search online for 'Book a Covid vaccine'.

### Pharmacy News

With Christmas fast approaching, we want to make patients

aware that we are only closed for two days over Christmas week — Christmas Day and Boxing Day; we will be open again on Friday 27 December. We will also be closed on New Year's Day.

We would appreciate it if patients would order their medication as normal.

### Training Days

The surgery will close on Tuesday 5 November at 1:00pm and not reopen until the following morning.

All Training Days for 2024 can be seen on our website.

### Winter Warm Hub Bunbury

Following the success of the last two winters' "Warm Hub", the ALIVE initiative, which was set up by Pat Blackwood, will be re-starting at the Nags Head in Bunbury.

Starting on 1st November, the warm hub will be open from 10:30am, Monday to Friday.

Elderly villagers are welcome to enjoy a free, hot cup of tea or coffee with biscuits in a warm and friendly environment.



I want to start this article by recognising and thanking the group of volunteers who empty the donation box outside the village hall and then take all the bags of goods to the depot in Winsford. The depot is always delighted to receive donations from the Bunbury area. Thank you also to everyone who takes the time to shop and pop goods into the box. Without your efforts we would have nothing to collect!

I contacted Zoe at Mid-Cheshire Foodbank (MCFB) for an update and here is an edit of her response:

"Over the past year MCFB has seen a fall in donations, so we value all the more the effort put into the collection locations made available by local communities such as

yours. Everything donated, no matter how small, really does make a difference and without your continued generosity we would not be able to deliver the five-day support we currently give. This is more than the standard three-day parcels provided by many food banks.

The items of which we are regularly most in need are pulses, porridge oats, cooking oil, honey, UHT milk, and tinned meat of all types. We have plenty of beans, pasta and cereal.

Thank you again for your support, it is very much appreciated"

I would like to echo her thanks to you all.

**Anne James**



# “Just one thing” for a healthier life

*We have chosen to continue with this series of articles based on the popular podcast by the late Dr Michael Mosley as testament to his life's work and passion for educating and helping people, which is what we believe he would have wanted.*



## Nibble some nuts

Nuts have long been reviled as too high in fat to be healthy but all that is being overturned. The fats in nuts are all unsaturated, and they also contain plenty of fibre and protein. A nut is defined as a dry fruit with a single seed encased in a hard shell and some of the 'nuts' we eat are not this, but drupes (a hard inner surrounded by a fleshy outer; these include almonds and cashews), but everything we refer to as a nut is equally good for us, including the peanut, which actually grows underground. A study of 300,000 people found that those who ate nuts regularly had less body fat and less obesity than those who didn't. This is attributed to several factors: we don't absorb all of the fat from them, only about 80%, due to their structure; we feel fuller after eating nuts than after eating simple carbohydrates like sugar; and they appear to alter how energy is burned in the body. Nuts also seem to increase longevity by slowing ageing; they protect the telomeres at the ends of our chromosomes which usually shrink with age so that cells don't function as well; eating nuts helps to retain the length of these telomeres.

Nuts contain anti-inflammatories and anti-oxidants and studies suggest that these, along with the telomere-protective effect, reduce the incidence of cancer, heart disease and diabetes. A Spanish study of 7,000 older adults who ate nuts three times a week were found to be 40% less likely to die of cancer and 50% less likely to die of heart disease than those who didn't eat nuts. Nuts are also believed to improve short-term memory, speech processing and attention in older adults, by improving the elasticity of small blood vessels in the brain.

Much of the goodness is in the skin, so eat them unpeeled, and of course beware of nut allergies, which are life-threatening in some individuals. And it's best not to eat the salted varieties, for obvious reasons. Between 15g and 30g per day is the suggested quantity, so we can all easily become a bit nutty!

## Try some Turmeric

Ancient Ayurvedic medicine has used turmeric as a

medicine to alleviate liver problems and digestive ailments for thousands of years, and in the last 20 years scientific research on its benefits has exploded. Best known as the ingredient which gives curries their distinctive yellow colouring, it is also used as a dye, and its main active ingredient has been identified as curcumin, a polyphenol with anti-inflammatory, anti-oxidant, anti-fungal and wound healing properties. An Australian study of older adults who took curcumin in tablet form had better working memory and lower fatigue than those who took the placebo, and a 2022 Singaporean study of 2,700 older adults who regularly ate rich curries over five years had better working memory and attention than those who didn't. The importance of curries is that curcumin is usually poorly absorbed, but eating it with fats and with pepper significantly increases the amount absorbed by the body.

One of the main current areas of study is its use for pain, especially chronic pain such as arthritis, and a study of 70 people with knee osteoarthritis found that the half who took turmeric extract over twelve weeks reported significantly less pain than the placebo group, though there was some reduction in this group too, as to be expected (pain is very susceptible to the placebo effect). The curcumin effect was comparable to that of NSAIDs (non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs) such as ibuprofen, but without the many side-effects that NSAIDs have. It is thought that some of the effect may be through the gut-brain axis, due to improvement of the gut microbiome by the curcumin. If you don't like curry, don't despair because you can add turmeric to almost anything; scrambled eggs, soups, yogurt, pancakes and even latte — one teaspoonful of the dried powder is deemed sufficient if taken with a fatty food. Other health claims for turmeric include improvements in asthma and eczema, and mood-boosting, so there are very many reasons to try this one, either as the food ingredient, or as a supplement.

*Liv Weller*

# Share your passion — the Boeing 747-400

Aviation, whether it be watching planes at Manchester Airport in the mid 1980s, travelling for holiday, or going to one of the numerous fantastic air shows that we have in the UK, has always been a passion of mine. You could even say (my children often do!) that I probably enjoy the journey just as much as the destination.

One aircraft in particular tops the list of all time favourites — the Boeing 747.

For over 50 years the Boeing 747 helped to bring affordable global air travel to millions of passengers. British Airways flew one of the largest Boeing 747 fleets and their 400 type was much loved by both passengers and her crew who were privileged enough to work onboard this special aircraft. However, the almost total grounding of commercial aviation during Covid-19 and a decision to bring their planned retirement forward, brought a hasty end to what was arguably the favourite aircraft of the world's favourite airline.



With the fleet grounded and destined to be stripped for parts and for scrap, myself and a small team of enthusiasts were inspired to preserve some of the history of the British Airways 747 and to bring key sections back to life. In July 2021, following months of planning, two large sections of aircraft were transported by road from South Wales to Tattenhall. Three years of restoration and engineering are now complete and the 744 Experience team are very pleased to announce that the most advanced and



complete Boeing 747 Flight Simulator and Upper Deck experience in the UK is now open!

You may wonder why we have called ourselves the "744 Experience". There are two reasons: British Airways always abbreviated the 747-400 aircraft type as "744" and Boeing own all rights to the number "747" (as well as 727, 737, 757 etc).

Thanks to the dedication and determination of the team, the original cockpit from the British Airways B747-400 registered G-CIVM now lives on as a fully operational fixed base B747-400 flight simulator. An experience as close to flying on the real aircraft as is possible. The experience is fully immersive with the addition of the entire seated Upper Deck Business Class cabin from British Airways B747-400 registered G-BYGG. Preserving these iconic sections of aircraft was a once in a lifetime opportunity and we hope that visitors enjoy the experience as much as we enjoyed working on it. Due to the level of functionality and operation, it is a unique facility in the UK and is a simulator that British Airways ex-B747 flight crew, passengers and enthusiasts are thrilled to



be able to "fly" once again.

So if you've flown on the Boeing 747 as a passenger or perhaps worked onboard as crew, or just always wanted to try your hand at flying a 747 using the original switches and controls, then this is an experience not to miss. Bunbury Cubs are visiting in November and the Youth Club won't be far behind in December, once Panto is finished.

*Dan Chang*

[744experience.co.uk](http://744experience.co.uk)



# Gardeners' November diary

## *Damage limitation*

It has been a challenging time in the garden this month with so much wet weather and strong winds. Plenty of clearing up to do.

My garden has structures created with trellises and hedges. Unfortunately, the box hedges, cut into cones and balls, have succumbed to box blight. There are alternatives to box (*buxus*) and the RHS have many examples of small leaved shrubs which can be kept smart and clipped into shape, such as *Ilex Crenata*, *Euonymus*, *Lonicera* and box leaf honeysuckle. Sadly, decisions will now have to be made as to what I replace my damaged box with. I will miss it as it always looked so smart when clipped.

However, the beauty of gardening is that you can create different schemes and colours and replace or move them when they disappoint.



## Just Sing news

Just Sing! is Bunbury's community choir and we are sadly saying goodbye to our conductor of the past two and a half years, Elaine Cook.

Elaine joined us when we restarted after lockdown as the remnant of Bunbury Singers, with a new name and new outlook. We have grown under Elaine's leadership from that core group of twelve people to a current membership of 30–35. Due in no small part to Elaine's capable and enthusiastic leadership, we are now singing more confidently than ever and we put on two concerts a year to raise money for local charities, which are always popular and appreciated by our audiences. Elaine will be sadly missed and we wish her very well in her busy life with all her other many commitments, musical and otherwise. However we have been very fortunate to persuade Susan Marrs to join as our new conductor/musical director. Susan graduated from Trinity College of Music, London and has enjoyed 30 years as a freelance Mezzo-Soprano and conductor. She is a Fellow of Trinity College, London.

Sue was a soloist during the Proms season of 2002, and spent 15 years singing with the Extra Chorus at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden; she has also sung with English National Opera. As a member of London Voices, Sue has enjoyed singing in concert halls all over the world — including Berlin, Lucerne, Paris, at the Lincoln Centre, New York and in Shanghai and Beijing. Her film score recordings have included "Star Wars" and "Harry Potter", "The Lord of the Rings" and "The Hobbit", "The Hunger Games" and "Fantastic beasts and where to find them".

Susan has taught singing for 35 years and has conducted the Nantwich Ladies Choir for the last 10 years. She was MD of the Nantwich Singers Chamber Choir from 2020 to 2022 and the Dee Ensemble in Chester for four years.

We are delighted to welcome Susan to Just Sing! Her first rehearsal with us will be on the 21 October at 7:30pm in Bunbury School's hall. Do come along and join us if you are interested; we do not audition new members and are open to anyone aged 16 and over. We use sheet music and sing in three parts: soprano, alto and baritone, but many of our members are not music readers, so do not exclude yourself on that basis! We will be starting Christmas songs at this time.

[www.justsingbunbury.co.uk](http://www.justsingbunbury.co.uk)





# The Alsama project - an update

*Elaine Crotty, our editor, brings us an update from Lebanon, where the situation for refugees has just got worse, but Alsama schools are kept open.*

I don't know if readers remember, but Tom and I support a group of schools that teach illiterate refugee teenagers in the Lebanon called Alsama. The Link featured an article on the project in the February 2024 issue. At the time there were 880 students in four schools and 1000 children on the waiting list. Our friend Meike who runs the project has been on Woman's Hour and Sky News recently talking about the impact that the war has had on the schools.

This article is an edited transcript of a recorded WhatsApp message from Maram, one of the best students at Alsama. She had been offered a scholarship to play cricket at a school in the UK but hadn't taken it up and was hoping to go to university in 2026. She was illiterate five years ago. Recently she had won a competition and followed the British Ambassador for the day. However, her family fled to Syria and the school hadn't heard anything from her until Meike's husband, Richard, received these messages and shared them on the supporters' WhatsApp group. From Richard:

"Well, we have news. She has just posted two messages in response to Ratan from Capital Kids cricket. The first gives insights into her existence in Syria. But it is the second, which I like best. What is a girl thinking about who has just been made a refugee for the second time in her short life? The injustice? The trauma? Or something else? The second message captures the spirit of Maram which is also the spirit of Alsama. Slightly surreal - but also golden.

Message 1 — Maram speaking: "We are here safe, and we are good. I am hoping everything will get better soon and we can return to Lebanon because I miss everything about it. I miss cricket, school, everyone in Lebanon and outside Lebanon that I know. I know the coach is trying to communicate with me a lot, but unfortunately, I don't have internet all the time. I reply when I can. It's hard. I know he's trying to

communicate with me so actually it's very meaningful and this makes me happy because you are asking and caring. Thank you so much. I really appreciate it."

Message 2 — "And of course I can't wait to return and play cricket, because here I don't have a bat or a ball, but don't worry I am training myself with stones and wood. I'm using anything. Any kind of wood I see as a stick, and I play all the shots that my heart loves. For bowling I use the stones to spin, because I am a left-

handed off spinner, so I need to practise. I can't wait to return."

Our friend Richard continued:

"The camps have been evacuated. The children have dispersed. Some across Lebanon and some in Syria. Many of the staff Lebanese Syrians, Palestinians are displaced too. Alsama is under fire. Literally. The children have been clamouring for the education to continue. This is their lifeline. The children have been issued with phones and SIM cards and the teachers have continued to be paid (thank you to those who paid into the emergency fund).

Teaching continues via WhatsApp and Zoom. The curriculum is being fine tuned and adapted to the situation. Accommodation has been rented for the Year 5 students in a safe area. They only have 16 months left until they apply for university and they want to get there. They are returning. Flats have been rented in the Christian quarter of Beirut — hopefully the last place to be bombed. Dormitories have been set up for some of the senior students and teachers.

The next step will be to create Alsama 'mini schools' around a teacher and a cluster of students. They are hoping that by the time you receive this magazine some classes will be running normally again. The Alsama schools are, in fact, the only schools operating in the whole country. On to cricket. A missile hit the cricket pitch. But they continue to play in car parks and courtyards — sometimes with new children displaced from the South. One of the boys who has been





displaced to Syria is training children to play cricket near Damascus. The photo is of some of the beautiful homework sent back by WhatsApp. This is written by a student who at the moment has no fixed location. There was also a message from one of

the students before his family fled, written on a whiteboard: 'Don't lose today's happiness because of yesterday's pain.' He is now returning to Beirut to carry on his studies."

Meike is an inspiration. She has not left Beirut and is determined to educate these children. It is her passion.

If anyone would like to donate to help the school in these difficult times here is the link to the website <https://www.justgiving.com/campaign/alsama>

The Alsama team, Meike is in the foreground of the photo (They are all smiling!)



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# Extreme weather and health services in low-income countries

*The impact of climate change is being felt by all of us — but for those who are struggling to achieve minimal standards of living, it is life-threatening and immediate. Our contributor is Paul Hunter, Professor in Medicine at the Norwich Medical School, University of East Anglia*

One of the clearest impacts of global warming is that storms, tornadoes, floods, droughts, landslips and wildfires seem to be becoming more common and more extreme. Collectively known as extreme weather events, one or other is regularly in the news. We see the effects that extreme weather has on people on TV screens; forests ablaze, flood-damaged homes, burnt-out towns and people seeking shelter remind us of the fragility of civilisation. But what the news rarely shows us is the long-term damage that such events can have on people's health.

Sometimes the link between extreme weather and long-term poor health is obvious such as injury or psychological trauma. But it can have devastating consequences for health services, especially in low-income countries; hospitals may struggle to cope with the influx of people needing treatment because of injury or disease, and medical and nursing staff may not be able to get to work if the roads are damaged or flooded. Afterwards hospitals may struggle to recover from the event; there may be more patients needing care if diseases such as malaria increase, or many people needing rehabilitation from injury, and there will often be a backlog of cases needing routine treatment. The hospital's buildings may be damaged and services such as water and electricity cut off. Essential supplies and drugs may also run out because of difficulties in delivery.

Paul Hunter leads a project to address this need at the University of East Anglia, in collaboration with University of Leeds, De Montfort University, London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine, Kamuzu University of Health Sciences – Malawi, Hanoi University of Public Health, Vietnam, Mbarara



University of Science and Technology, Uganda, and Mwanza Intervention Trials Unit, Tanzania.

We recently were successful in winning a four-year research grant to help health services in low-income



countries better plan for, cope with, and recover from extreme weather events. Dr Evanson Sambala from Kamuzu University of Health Sciences, Malawi, and myself are co-directors. We have a large team of researchers from the UK, Malawi, Tanzania, Uganda and Vietnam. Within the team we have medical, environmental, social and management scientists and engineers. This research is funded by the National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR) using UK international development funding from the UK Government to support global health research. By the end of the project, we hope to have produced a range of tools to help health service managers and health care practitioners make their hospitals and health centres more resilient in the face of extreme weather events. But at this stage we are still preparing for the main work. The first year of such a large project is always about agreeing what we intend to do and getting the appropriate government and ethical approvals. Early research is mainly reading what other researchers have already written about the issues so we build on existing knowledge, and don't just reinvent the wheel.

We had our first big meeting together in April, in Blantyre in the south of Malawi. Malawi is not the easiest country to get to and is currently the twelfth poorest nation globally but, to my mind, it is one of the most beautiful countries in Africa. It gave us the opportunity to visit one of its poorest districts,



Chikwawa, where our Malawi research is going to take place. In March 2023 Malawi was affected by Tropical Cyclone Freddy which hit Chikwawa particularly hard, but at the time of our visit it had been experiencing several months of drought.

We were intending to visit the community elders of the study site and then go on to visit the local health facilities. Our meeting with the elders took place in the local



church, a brick-built building with a corrugated iron roof and a mud floor, but just as we arrived the heavens opened. The noise of the rain on the tin roof was deafening and the water on the ground surrounding the

church started to rise. Sadly, we had to evacuate the area before the roads became impassable. The health centre we were intending to visit was flooded, with the minor operations theatre under a foot of water. Some 1,200 homes were destroyed or damaged that day.

The importance of this issue has again been highlighted by Super Typhoon Yagi which devastated parts of Northern Vietnam in early September close to where we shall be working. Hundreds of people are dead or missing and many hospitals have suffered severe damage.

Our next meeting is in Mwanza on the Southern shore of Lake Victoria in Tanzania, which has seen substantial rises in water levels in recent years with displacement of over 200,000 people who were living on its shore.

That meeting will be when the main work begins.

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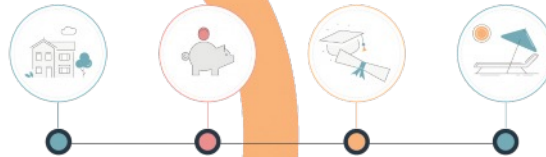
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